



# THE NINJAGO MOVIE



## MOVIE DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

**Q: What was your vision of LEGO® NINJAGO® City going into the movie?**

**A:** One of my first ideas about THE LEGO® NINJAGO® MOVIE™ from a stylistic point of view was to bring the toys outside into a natural environment, as if we are playing with LEGO bricks in the back yard. Along with the plants and other organic elements, I knew I wanted to have a lot of water. I thought about coastal cities in Asia and Europe that are designed around canals, and this felt like a great place to start. The other idea is that this is a city that is constantly rebuilding itself because of the continual attacks from Garmadon, so it felt really fun to think about a city building and re-building on top of itself.

**Q: LEGO NINJAGO City is already familiar to fans from the animated TV show. How is the movie version different?**

**A:** Aside from the scope and scale of it, it is not much different.

**Q: How well do you think the LEGO NINJAGO City set captured the spirit of the setting in the film?**

**A:** It is amazing. I know I am biased, but I think this is one of the coolest LEGO sets ever – it has captured the spirit beautifully. In fact, there are some very specific things in the set that are actually in the movie. Can you find them?

**Q: Sometimes a setting can be a character in its own right in a film. Do you think that is the case with LEGO® NINJAGO® City in your movie?**

**A:** Absolutely. The design reflects the personality and variety of cultures of the people of NINJAGO® City. There is a whimsy to the architecture that represents their good nature and positivity in the face of constant attacks from Garmadon. The people of NINJAGO City love their home and will not let it be destroyed by Garmadon.

**Q: Do you have a favorite character or function in the LEGO NINJAGO City set?**

**A:** It is funny, but I really love the ATM cash machine. It spits out money!

**Q: The layers of the model show a city that has been built upon itself over the years. How central is this concept to the vision of the city in the film? Were there any real-life examples referenced as this idea was being developed?**

**A:** As the film progressed, we developed a lot of backstory as to how the city was built. The concept is that the ancient feudal NINJAGO town grew into the major metropolis it is today as the people built and rebuilt the city vertically upon the structures of the original village. We loved this idea, not only because it feels very much in LEGO® style, but also because it reflects how the present day NINJAGO City is rooted in its history. We looked at many real-world examples like Singapore, Hong Kong, Seattle, Sydney, New York and even Venice, London and Amsterdam.

- Charlie Bean, from the Directing Team of THE LEGO NINJAGO MOVIE™



# MODEL DESIGNER INTERVIEW



**Q: What are some of the challenges of turning a movie location into a model?**

**A:** In the movie, LEGO® NINJAGO® City is unlike anything we have seen before in a LEGO set. One of the main challenges with a model like this is the difference in size between the vast on-screen location and the smaller model version.

As both are built from LEGO bricks, our approach was to choose key silhouettes and details which could be rebuilt at a smaller scale and still match the overall look.

In order to capture the scope of NINJAGO City, we split the model into three sections, each representing a different chapter of the city's evolution. However, this led to the challenge of blending the levels together into a complete model. For example, we positioned the tower further back on the model, to give the impression of it rising from behind the buildings.

**Q: What is your favorite functionality in the model?**

**A: Nico:** Definitely the crab cooking function. After going through multiple iterations, some of which involved ejecting the uncooked crab back into the water, we ended up with a simple but very robust function that can transform almost anything that can fit inside the grill!

**Chris:** For me I would have to pick the sushi bar, as it is very simple and easily decodable for what it is meant to represent.

**Q: The architectural style of LEGO® NINJAGO® City is layers built upon layers as time goes on. Did you do any research on similar structures in the real world while preparing to create this model?**

**A:** We shared a lot of the same inspiration that the moviemakers used, but we also drew inspiration from real-life places we have visited, amazing cyberpunk creations in the fan community, and of course the NINJAGO® TV show.

**Q: What was the most fun part of designing such a big and complex model?**

**A: Nico:** My favorite part of designing this model was the opportunity to include things which we would not normally have in a NINJAGO set, such as the pufferfish or the pink bonsai tree.

**Chris:** I found the most fun aspect of this model was how easy the size allowed me to visualise the characters' movements and interactions around the city.

**Q: What other lines have you designed models for?**

**A: Nico:** Up until now I have worked primarily for NINJAGO, but have also helped out in small amounts on the MIXELS™ and BIONICLE® themes.

**Chris:** Having worked at the LEGO Group for the past five years I have been lucky to work on Galaxy Squad, THE LEGO MOVIE™, Ultra Agents, Speed Champions and of course NINJAGO.

**Q: Do you have a favorite ninja?**

**A: Nico:** Cole.

**Chris:** It has to be Zane because he is a robot and a ninja. I think everyone can agree that he is cool.

- Nicolaas Vás and Christopher Leslie Stamp, LEGO NINJAGO model designers

